

Mr. LESLIE's Answer to the Remarks on his first Dialogue against the Socinians.

Since the *First Dialogue* was Printed there is come out a *Socinian Sheet* against it, Intituled, *Remarks on Mr. Charles Leslie's first Dialogue on the Socinian Controversy*. And I think it Proper to take notice of it here, for it may help to Illustrat more at Large what is there said in short. And because I hear some say, it is well Wrote, and that many lay Stress upon it,

(1.) First I Observe that this *Remarker* has not kept up to that Character the *Socinian Writers* give themselves (but without much Reason, as I have shew'd in these *Dialogues*) of being the fairest *Adversaries*, and an Example to all others of Managing *Controversy* without *Heat* or *Passion*, or *Personal Reflections*. For he has treated me in a very *Rough Manner*, calling the *Instances* I bring, *Ridiculous*, p. 1. And that I am *Paganish* in my *Notions*, p. 6. And lays, p. 1. *If such poor Philosophy, such shallow Reasoning, and such gross Divinity, must baffle the Socinians, I confess they ought to be the last who pretend to the Character of Men of Reason.*

But notwithstanding all this *Contempt* of what I have said, I cannot but think it has given him some *Trouble*, because it has made him so *Angry*. For it is *Losers* that have leave to Talk at this Rate. And as you shall see him Talk afterwards.

(2.) My Argument was, That we cannot Charge any thing to be a *Contradiction* in one *Nature*, because

it is so in *Another*, unless we understand both *Natures*. Because a *Nature* we understand not cannot be Explain'd to us but by Allusion to some *Nature* we do understand. And there is that Difference in *Natures* that no Allusion will lie betwixt them, that is, none that is *Proper*, that will come up to the thing, or give a Person who Knows not the *Nature* a true *Idea* of it, or even Reconcile it from *Contradiction*, while he Considers the *Nature* he do's not Understand, by way of Allusion to another *Nature* which he do's Understand.

(3.) To Illustrate this I gave several *Instances*, of which this *Remarker* has p. 1. pick'd out two to shew his Wit upon. One is, That if a Man could he Suppos'd to be without *Thought*, it wou'd be *Impossible* to make Him Apprehend what it was, or the *Progress* of it, as from Hence to Rome in an Instant, &c. It is Common to say to a Man that is *Musing*, *Where are you?* And to Answer I was at Rome, or such a Place. Now supposing any one (if it were possible) not to know what *Thought* was, he wou'd Apprehend your *Body* was Remov'd to Rome and Back again as soon as you could speak. And by Allusion to the *Motion* of *Body*, this could not be Reconcil'd to him from being a Flat *Contradiction*, that any thing could move a Thousand Miles as soon as a *Tard*.

In answer to this the *Remarker* tells you p. 1. *That when you think of Rome or any other Place, 'tis only the Idea of it in your Imagination which you Contemplate,*

semplat, and not a Leap or Local Motion of your Thoughts to it.

Who knows not this that has any Thoughts? But upon the Supposition that a Man did not know what Thought was, he could have no Apprehension of it but as of a Local Motion. And what you call *Idea* he would fancy to be some Horse or Coach that Carry'd you very Swiftly; which yet would not solve the Contradiction as to him, because the Swiftness of the Motion, suppose it a Cannon Bullet, cannot go two yards so soon as One.

(4.) But because it may be too Extravagant to suppose a Man without Thought, tho' some have very Little; and Suppositions are Allow'd in Argument even of what never was; yet I Insist not on this, but have given another Instance which is Fact, and daily before us, that is, of a Man Born Blind. And how you could give him any Notion of Sight, or Explain to him how the Eye can Reach a Star as soon as the Top of the Chimney? He can feel his Eye with his Hand, and that it is there Fixt and do's not go out of his Head, how then can he Imagine it gets a Thousand Miles off in an Instant, while he Feels it do's not Stir at all? He can have no Notion of this but by Allusion to some other of his Senses which he has. And by the word Reach, how the Sight can Reach a Star, he fancies Arms or Legs, that being all the way by which he can Reach to any thing. And then knowing that the Motion of Legs or Arms must go one yard before it go's two, he takes your Description of Sight to be not only some Strange and Wonderful thing, which he will readily Grant; but he will Insist that it is a flat Contradiction. And therefore that he must not Believe it. And it is Impossible to Explain it so to him as to Reconcile it from being a Contradiction to him.

To this says the Remarker very Ingeniously, when we see the Stars, our Eyes move not up to them, but their extended Rays strike upon the Eye. But the man Born Blind would say, Nothing Strikes upon my Eye; for then I shoud Feel it. And he knows nothing what you mean by Rays or by See. Nor could think of any other way but that the Eye must get up to the Star, or the Star come down to the Eye. And your talking of Rays will not Solve the Contradiction one bit as to him. Nor can he be any otherwise Convinced than by Persuading him that what is a Contradiction in one Nature he understands, must not be Concluded to be so in another Nature he do's not understand, and that the Nature of Sight is such as that no Allusion from any other of his Senses can make him Apprehend what it is. Nothing but this can Silence his Murmurs about Contradiction.

Is it not Reason then that our Murmurs about Contradiction in the Nature of God shoud be Silenc'd, seeing it can be told us no otherwise than by such Words and Allusions as are Proper to Man; And that the Divine Nature is Infinitely more Different and Diverse from the Nature of Man than one of our Senses is from another? And as the Contradiction the Blind-man conceives in the Nature of Sight is Caus'd by his comparing it with the Motion of his Legs or Arms, and that occasion'd by improper Words we must use to him, all others being Unintelligible to him but what have Allusion to some of the Senses he has: So in like manner those Contradictions we Conceive in the Nature of God are all Occasion'd by the improper Words which must be us'd to us in Expressing of His Nature, all Words being totally Unintelligible to us, which have not Allusion to something we understand. And thus we Conceiving
of

of *God* after the manner of *Men*, make all those things to be *Contradictions* in *God* which in our Conception of the *Words* are a *Contradiction* to *Men*. As that several *Persons* shou'd not be several *Men*, and that the *Father* shou'd not be before the *Son*, &c. Whereas these *Terms* of *Father*, *Son*, *Persons*, &c. are not proper to the *Nature* of *God*, (tho' the most *Proper* we can use or understand) And therefore we are not to Conceive of them in the manner they are us'd and apply'd to *Men*, nor draw *Consequences* from them as we do when these *Words* are Apply'd to *Men*. Otherwise we shall Run into the like *Contradictions* as the *Blind-man* about *Sight*.

This will throw off all that the *Remarker* says of Inferring three *Gods* from the Term of three *Persons*, because it is so among *Men*. He talks like a *Blind-man* of Colours, of things which he must Confess he do's not understand; yet will be inferring *Contradictions* in them. He owns he cannot speak *Properly* of them, yet finds fault with the *Terms* we use, because they are not *Proper*, tho' he can find none more *Proper*.

(5.) He may as well say, That *God* is not *Eternal*, because we have no word to Express *Duration* higher than the word *Beginning*, and ther can be no *Beginning* in *Eternity*.

He may say it is a *Contradiction* that all things shou'd be *Present* with *God* (which yet he will not Deny to be an undoubted Verity) because it is a *Contradiction* to *Men*, that the *Past* or *Future* shou'd be *Present*, because then a thing wou'd be *Past* and not *Past*, *Future* and not *Future* at the same time.

These and other things I mentioned in my first *Dialogue*, but the *Remarker* takes no notice of them, nor will own the *Absurdity* of infer-

ring *Contradictions* in *God* from *Contradictions* in *Man*, occasion'd by the *Improper Terms* we are Forc'd to make use of to Express *God* after the manner of *Men*.

(6.) But he has laid his Stress upon this Instance I brought of the *Blind-man*. And here he thinks he has an Advantage of me. And I am willing to join Issue with him upon it, That if he can find out any *Words* that are *Proper*, whereby to Express the *Nature* of *Sight* to a *Man* Born *Blind*, and that he will give the *Blind-man* leave to draw *Consequences* and infer *Contradictions* from such *Words* according as he understands them; then I will undertake to solve all the *Contradictions* that he pretends to muster up in the *Terms* whereby we Express the *Holy Trinity*. And let him shew any Difference betwixt these Cases if he can, only this, That far greater *Disparity* ought to be Allow'd as to the *Propriety* of *Words* when *Terms* belonging to *Men* are spoke of *God*, than when what belongs to one of our *Senses* is Apply'd to another.

(7.) And now let the Reader Judge what occasion he had of thus Insulting me, p. 1.

"But are you indeed (*says he to me*)
 "so very weak as to think you move
 "all the way to *Rome*, and are got thither as soon as you think of it? No,
 "Sir, whatever hast you may be in thither, you go no faster than your
 "Legs can carry you. And shou'd
 "You Challenge all the *Philosophy* in
 "the World? Who have to little
 "as not to know, that when you
 "think of *Rome*, or any other Place,
 "'tis only the *Idea* of it in your
 "imagination which you Contem-
 "plate, and not a Local Motion of
 "your Thoughts to it. In like man-
 "ner, when we see the *Stars* our
 Eyes

" Eyes move not up to them, but
 " their Extended *Rays* strike upon
 " the Eye. I see you have a Head
 " much fitter for entertaining and
 " coining Mysteries, than for Explai-
 " ning or Defending 'em. It's a
 " wonder you did not think rather,
 " that *Rome* or *Constantinople* shift and
 " come into your Head: And then
 " since in other Cases a lesser Ves-
 " sel cannot contain a greater, nor
 " a Nut-shell hold an House; you
 " might wonder how your little
 " Head should hold such great Ci-
 " ties; And with the same Philoso-
 " phy infer, that what is a Contradi-
 " ction to *Nutshells* is none to *Heads*,
 " and Challenge all Philosophy to Re-
 " concile it.

Now, Reader, has he not fully un-
 derstood me, do you think, and an-
 swer'd me smartly?

(8.) But will you see him freely
 Confessing what he thus *Ridicules*?
 He says in this same p. 1.

" Indeed there may be something
 " attributed to one Nature, where
 " there is nothing Inconsistent, of
 " Contradictory to it; while if at-
 " tributed to another it might meet
 " with something Inconsistent, whence
 " a *Contradiction* will arise in the
 " one and not in the other.

Now this is the whole of what I
 have been contending for. I desire
 no more of him. And having gran-
 ted this, how can he Deny that what
 is a *Contradiction* in one Nature, that
 is, of *Man*, may not be so in another
 Nature, that is, of *God*? Or are
 ther any two Natures more *Distant*
 and more *Different* than the Nature
 of *God* and of a *Creature*? Or do
 we understand the Nature of *God*
 more *Perfectly* and *Clearly* than our
 own Nature? Is it not Reasonable
 then what I said, as he Quotes my
 words, p. 2. *That we must not ob-*

*ject Contradictions in the Incomprehen-
 sible Nature of God, from Comparing
 it with our own.* Because we *Under-
 stand* not his Nature. To which the
Remarker says,

(9.) " I should grant this, in an
 " object of which we have no know-
 " ledge at all: But surely if I have
 " some, tho' a partial knowledge of
 " the Infinite God, I may discern
 " what is Contradictory to that lit-
 " tle knowledge of him. Nor is any
 " thing more usual or Just, than to
 " Deny such or such a Doctrine, be-
 " cause Incompatible to the Divine
 " Attributes, to his Spirituality, Eter-
 " nity, Goodness, &c.

To which I reply, That the Nature
 and Attributes of any thing are Dis-
 ferent. We may know the *Attri-
 butes*, when we cannot know the Na-
 ture. As we may see the *River*,
 but cannot Reach the *Spring* whence
 it flows. And this Dispute of the
Trinity is not about any of the *Attri-
 butes* of *God*, but Concerning His ve-
 ry Nature and Essence, and how His
Being is Compos'd, (if I might use
 that Word) of which I may say we
 are totally Ignorant, it is a *Light* In-
 accessible to us, we know Nothing
 of it at all. And therefore cannot
 Charge *Contradiction* in the *Revela-
 tion* that is given to us of it. If we
 look Directly upon the *Sun* in its
 Strength, we see Nothing at all,
 it Strikes us *Blind*. But if we turn
 our Backs, we Discern the *Light*
 that comes from it. The *Attributes*
 of *God* are the *Rays* of the *Sun*, but
 His Nature is the *Sun* it self, we
 cannot Look upon it. It is Utter
Darkness to Us, through the Ex-
 cess of the *Light*. We can Discern
 Nothing at all in it, or say it is
Thus or *Thut*, or that *This* or *That*
 is *Contradictory* to it. Alas, how
 little do we know of our own Na-
 ture;

ture? We know it only by the *Effects* and the *Qualities* we find in our Selves. But what it is in its self we cannot tell, we are Exceedingly in the *Dark*. And so as to the *Nature of Trees, Flowers, Plants* &c. We find by Experience such *Effects* and *Virtues* in them, but we know not the *Nature* or *Essence* of them, no not of a *Pile of Grass*, why of that *Colour, Shape, or Virtue*. How then can we Know what the *Nature of God* is? Or can we say it is not Rightly *Reveal'd* to Us in the *Holy Scripture*? Do we Know of what *Composition* our own *Souls* are made? Or how they *Act* in Us? Do we Know any thing at all of the *Soul* but by the *Effects*? We Know we *Think*, therefore we Conclude we have a *Soul*, but what that *Soul* is in its self, we Know not. Yet we wou'd Know the *Nature* of God!

(10.) This brings me to a *Criticism* of the *Remarker* upon the *Parallel* I made use of concerning the three *Faculties* of the *Soul*. He says, p. 3. That the *Memory* is not another *Faculty*, but only an *Act* of the *Understanding*. Now I thought that the *Understanding* was only *Conversant* about what was then *Present* before it. And that the *Memory* brought back *Past* things, and so made them *Present* to the *Understanding*. Whence a Man may have a good *Understanding*, and yet a bad *Memory*. Do we say of the *Understanding* that it *Forgets*? I take *Truth* or *Falshood* to be the *Objects* of the *Understanding*. But is *Love* or *Hatred* so? A Man may have an *Aversion*, and not know the *Reason* of it.

*Non Amote, Sabidi, nec possum dicere
Quare,
Hoc tantum possum dicere, Non Amo te.*

Are ther *Antipathys* in the *Understanding*? I think this is generally Attributed to the *Will*, and it is Agreed that it is a *Distinct Faculty* from the *Understanding*. And if ther be Different *Faculties* in the same *Soul*, it Answers all the Purpose for which I brought that *Parallel*. Nay, if it be but so Thought, it do's as well for me, to Solve the *Objection* about *Contradiction*, That Men shou'd not think a *Plurality* of *Persons* in *God* to be a *Contradiction* when the same *Difficulty* arises from a *Plurality* of *Faculties* in the *Soul*. For Three *Faculties* can no more be *One Faculty*, than Three *Persons* can be *One Person*. And yet these Different *Faculties* make up but *One* and the Self same *Soul*.

(11.) But I have Sufficiently Caution'd that I intend not to bring any *Proof* from these *Parallels*, Nor lay the stress of the *Cause* upon them, yet I thought them not altogether Useless, to shew Men how far they may Mistake in Charging *Contradictions*, from one *Nature* to another.

(12.) I have likewise told, That no *Parallel* in *Created Natures* can Answer *Exactly* or Come up to the *Nature of God*; only Point Him out at a Great *Distance*, and with Infinite *Disproportion*. And therefore that we must not Argue *Stritly* from the *One* to the *Other*. Yet the *Remarker* will not Observe this, but Argues of the *Persons* of *God* as of *Human Persons*. And says, p. 4. If three *Divine Persons* be like three *Human Persons*—And if three *Divine Persons* should as Properly be accounted three *Gods*, as three *Human Persons* can, in *Strit Speech*, be accounted three *Men*—Thence he Infers three *Gods* &c.

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He cannot I think but see the Fallacie of this Argument, after all that I have said. But he will not see it! He will still Argue *Strictly*, from the Word *Person*, and Apply it to God in the same manner that it is Us'd among Men. If he wou'd Apply the word *Father* so, (which himself gives to God) or God's being said to *Repent*, to *Grieve*, &c. What Work wou'd he make, what *Contradictions* might he Inter? His Brother Socinian Mr. Biddle (as I have shew'd) turn'd *Anthropomorphit* by this sort of Argument, and from Man being said to be made after the *Image* of God, held God to have a *Body*, and of *Human Shape*. And he might as well have made Him a *Bird* too, because ther is Mention made of His *Wings* and *Feathers*! This Savours not of the *Sagacity* the Socinians think Peculiar to Themselves.

Psal. xci. 4.

(13.) From the like Grofs Conceptions the Remarker, p. 7. raises Difficulties how a *Begotten Being* can be God. Thinking of *Begetting* after the Manner of Men! And then the *Father* must be in *Time*, as well as in *Nature*, before the *Son*. And it having been told him that supposing the *Son* to be *Eternal*, its *Light* wou'd be as *Eternal*, he Replies, p. 7. That this *Parallel* will not do, for that the *Light* which (says he) *You call an Effect of the Sun, is indeed, the very Sun it self, so may well, be as Old*. By which the very *Sun*, we see in the *Firmament*, and is many times Bigger than the whole *Earth*, can Creep through a *Crawny*, and be All of it in this Room, and in a Thousand other Places at the same Time! This will help *Trans-Substantiation* not a little! But is it so indeed, that this Subtile Socinian, can see no Differe-

rence betwixt the very *Sun* it Self, and the *Light* that flows from it? It is then time to have done Disputing with him. And he Runs into as Great *Absurdities* to get Rid of these *Parallels* as he Charges upon me for making Use of them.

He says (as before Quoted, *Self*. 4.) *That when we See the Stars, our Eyes move not up to them, but their extended Rays strike upon the Eye*. But if the *Rays* or the *Light* be the very *Star* it self, then the very *Star* it self Strikes upon the *Eye*. Let him Consider whether ther is any thing so very *Grofs* as this in any of the *Parallels* I have produc'd. And on whose side lies the poor *Philosophy*, and *Shallow Reasoning*.

(14.) Therefore leaving this Subject, I will now only Answer an Observation he makes from *Scripture*, wherein he says, p. 2. *God Almighty is Perpetually express'd in the Singular Number, Under One, He, Me, Thou, &c.* Now left the Reader of these Remarks should be Carry'd away with this, I must mind him, That this Socinian says this, without taking any Notice of the *Texts* I have given to the Contrary in the 2d Dialogue p. 32, &c. Beginning with the first of *Genesis* where God is Spoken of in the *Plural* as well as the *Singular* Number according to the *Hebrew*, *He* is there called *Gods*, and *Us*, as well as *God*, and *Me*. And is He not spoken of in the *Plural* Number in the *Form* of *Baptism* in the Name of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*? The Remarker ought to have Mark'd this, and not to have put the *Objection* over again, without saying something to the Answer had been made to it.

If this sheet gives him not full Satisfaction, I shall be willing to hear from him again.

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FINIS.